

## **PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)**

### **FY 2022 Jóvenes en Acción Program**

#### **Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0008730**

Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued by the Office of Citizen Exchanges' Youth Programs Division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for the FY 2022 Jóvenes en Acción program. Your proposal must conform to the solicitation, the guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). Any application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the Standard Guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying solicitation, the solicitation is to be the dominant reference.

### **I. STATEMENT OF WORK**

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico are supporting the participation of high school youth in an intensive, substantive four-week exchange in the United States.

The exchange activities will introduce the participants to a comprehensive survey of civic education, community service, and youth leadership development, as well as subthemes such as social integration and acceptance of marginalized communities in Mexico, digital literacy including countering disinformation, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, education and workforce development, and environmental issues. Activities will focus on building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas. The students and educators will participate in workshops, community service activities, meetings with community leaders, and discussion groups and will have opportunities for substantive interaction with each other and their U.S. peers.

Award Recipient responsibilities include:

- 1) Preparation for travel
- 2) Exchange Activities
- 3) Follow-on Activities
- 4) Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the program's impact and implementation in support of embassy and regional objectives, in accordance with the Performance Monitoring Plan in Section D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of the NOFO.

- 5) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in program implementation, provide timely reporting of progress and emergencies involving the health and safety of participants to ECA and PAS, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
- 6) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of sub-award recipients.
- 7) Manage all sub-awards, both programmatically and financially; develop and implement a thorough plan for oversight with a special focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants.

In a cooperative agreement, the Department is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. The responsibilities of the Department are as follows:

1. Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
2. Facilitate interaction with the regional bureau and embassy.
3. Arrange meetings with U.S. Department of State officials in Washington, D.C.
4. Approve the final candidate and alternate nominations.
5. Approve applications, publicity materials, and final calendar of exchange activities.
6. Approve housing arrangements, including the selection of host families.
7. Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and site visits.
8. Approve any and all changes to the format of the program caused by COVID-19.
9. Perform an annual performance evaluation/review of the primary award recipient to ensure program goals are being met. Make recommendations for changes or replacement of sub-award partners when program goals are not being sufficiently met.

## **II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

The award recipient's specific responsibilities for each program include:

- 1) Preparation
  - a) Contact participants before the program to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests, in collaboration with PAS. Attend the pre-departure orientation in Mexico City a few days prior to the start of the exchange.
  - b) Process DS-2019 forms. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
  - c) Ensure that each participant meets medical and health standards and has required immunizations, vaccines, and tests to travel to the United States.
  - d) Enroll all participants in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefits plan for the duration of the exchange, and assist with claims as necessary.
  - e) Develop communications plan addressing program amplification and emergency procedures.
  - f) Conduct a pre-departure orientation for participants, including general and

program-specific information, as well as intercultural training, and gender-specific training on sexual harassment prevention and awareness. Solicit input from PAS and invite them to participate in the pre-departure orientation and welcome session.

- g) Hire and train staff, as needed, to accompany participants during the exchange period. Criminal background checks, including a search of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for all program staff.
- h) Make housing arrangements. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer homestays (lodging and meals) to the participants for the majority of the exchange period. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health and safety of participants.
- i) Provide local partners, staff, and host families an orientation and overview on the program's goals and the visitors' culture and sensitivities.
- j) Arrange for adult accompaniment on the international flight, and for all domestic and international travel and ground transportation.
- k) Arrange participants' international and domestic travel, ground transportation, group meals, disbursement of stipends, and in-country travel expenses. All international travel should comply with the Fly America Act.
- l) Have health contingency plans in the event of COVID 19 positive test results or changes in health protocols.

## 2) Exchange Activities

- a) Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive four-week exchange programs on the stated themes that will develop participants' knowledge and skill base in civic education, community service and leadership. Exchange activities must promote program goals. Activities will be school and community-based, as appropriate to the project. Recruit peers from the United States to be engaged in activities with the exchange participants.
- b) Provide opportunities for the adult participants to work with their peers and other professionals, volunteers, and youth advocates with whom they can discuss the support of youth development.
- c) Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities. Ensure that the range of activities provides a balanced view of the social and political spectrum.
- d) Engage participants in at least one community service activity each week during the exchange. The program should provide context for the participants – identifying community needs, volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event and helps participants apply the experience at home.
- e) Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' well-being and prevent and deal in a timely manner with any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may

arise. Immediately inform ECA and PAS about any significant health or safety issues affecting program participants via secure email or telephone.

- f) The award recipient must provide proper staff supervision to ensure that the teenagers have safe and pedagogically-rich programs. Staff, along with the adult participants, will provide societal context to enhance learning, and counsel students as needed.
  - g) Provide a welcome orientation to serve as an introduction to the program and its objectives as well as an introduction to the host country.
  - h) Provide a closing session to summarize program activities, prepare participants for their return home, and plan for the future as alumni. Ensure participants have a thorough understanding of how to utilize the Jóvenes en Acción alumni network and any web or social media network designed to connect participants with current and previous participants.
- 3) Follow-on Activities
- a) Provide guidance and support for participants' implementation of service projects that reinforce values and skills imparted during the exchange program to help them apply what they have learned upon returning to their schools and communities.
  - b) Conduct follow-on activities with program alumni that reinforce the leadership values and skills imparted during the exchange program and guide participants as they apply what they have learned while implementing their service projects within their schools and communities.
  - c) Present creative and effective ways to address program themes for both program participants and their peers to amplify program impact.
  - d) Support alumni in preparing presentations/blogs/articles to share their experiences once they return home.
  - e) Continually engage alumni in the network for the length of the cooperative agreement and encourage alumni engagement and reporting through a web-based or social media platform designed and elaborated in the proposal.
  - f) Arrange visits by a project staff member to participate in activities organized by the U.S. embassy and/or the in-country partner, as needed.
  - g) Report program highlights and provide evidence of program impact during and after the exchange, and throughout the award cycle.
- 4) Measure and evaluate the program in accordance with Section D.10. Program Performance Monitoring and Evaluation of the NOFO.
- 5) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in program implementation, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA and PAS, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
- 6) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of sub-award recipients.

- 7) Manage all sub-awards, both programmatically and financially; develop and implement a thorough plan for oversight with a special focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants.

The responsibilities of the Department of State (ECA and PAS Mexico City) include:

1. Provide advice and assistance in the execution of all program components.
2. Facilitate interaction within the Department of State, to include ECA, the regional bureau, and U.S. Embassy Mexico City.
3. Manage the recruitment and selection of the participants, provide pre-departure briefings, and oversee follow-on activities in collaboration with the implementing partner in Mexico selected by the U.S. Embassy.
4. Arrange meetings with U.S. Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and Mexico.
5. Approve publicity materials and final calendar of exchange activities.
6. Approve housing arrangements, including the selection of host families.
7. Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the award recipient and site visits.
8. Perform an annual performance review of the primary award recipient to ensure program goals are being met. Make recommendations for changes or replacement of sub-award partners when program goals are not sufficiently met. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds are conditions of continued administration of the program and execution of the Non-Competitive Continuation (NCC) years. The Department of State's performance reviews are separate from the recipient's reporting requirements under Section F.3 of the solicitation.

Participants: PAS and the Mexican Ministry of Public Education will recruit, screen, and select the participants. The youth participants will be high school students between the ages of 15 and 18 who have demonstrated leadership aptitude, and an interest in community service and the project themes; exhibit flexibility, maturity, integrity, good social skills, and open-mindedness; and have the motivation necessary to be active and successful exchange participants. Although participants will be proficient in English, intensive English classes during the first week of the program will help them gain confidence in their speaking ability.

Orientations: PAS in collaboration with a local implementing partner will provide a pre-departure orientation for the participants, with program-specific information provided by the award recipient. The award recipient should plan to attend the pre-departure orientation in Mexico City immediately prior to the start of the exchange and accompany the group on the international flight. The award recipient will conduct a welcome orientation for the participants to introduce them to the host community and to prepare them for the activities ahead. The welcome orientation should include a general political, historical, educational, and cultural introduction to the United States, information related specifically to the objectives and themes of the program, and practical and administrative information. Every orientation must include a

discussion on codes of conduct, including resources for reporting inappropriate behavior, for online and in-person engagement.

Exchange Program: The program should consist primarily of interactive activities, practical experiences, and other opportunities that provide an introduction to the civic, cultural, and educational institutions of the United States. Activities should use hand-on methods to help the participants learn about the fundamentals of civil society and community activism, build their leadership skills, and develop similar activities for their peers in their home country. The Bureau urges applicants to present innovative, resourceful, and effective programming ideas. Applicants should justify their choices by explaining how their program plan will meet the stated goals.

The exchange will include four to seven days in Washington, D.C. at any point in the exchange, for educational activities that focus on the U.S. political system and citizen involvement in public life. This time may include a visit to the U.S. Department of State to provide exposure to U.S. foreign policy with Mexico. This segment and the remaining weeks in communities outside Washington, D.C. will include a variety of activities and will offer the participants exposure to the diversity of American life.

The activities could include a mix of workshops or training sessions, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, volunteer service, leadership training, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Many of these should be planned in conjunction with participation in school and community activities in a way that is educational both for the exchange participants and their hosts/peers. Intensive English language classes should be held during the first week to help students gain confidence in their speaking ability. With the exception of the intensive English classes, exchange participants should not attend classes in a school for more than a few days. All programming should include U.S. students wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included:

- Community service/volunteer activities
- Peer training/education workshops
- Teambuilding exercises
- Fundraising strategies
- Project/time management workshops
- Leadership development with workshop trainers or organizations
- Meetings with government, community, and business leaders
- Computer training that emphasizes research, critical thinking and analysis, and the use of the computer and internet and social media platforms as resources and tools in education and business
- Exercises related to conflict resolution, increasing tolerance and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the project's themes and developing presentation skills

- Visits to historical sites, government and community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about principals of government, history, and society with tourism
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical and other extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for participants to work and play together

The award recipient will conduct a welcome orientation for the participants upon arrival in the United States to introduce them to the program and the community and discuss codes of conduct, including resources for reporting inappropriate behavior, for online and in-person engagement.. Exchanges will end with a closing session summarizing the experience, sharing action plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. The ideas and action plans to be implemented at home will come from the participants, but the project staff should be prepared to encourage, assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the exchange and during the follow-on period.

#### Sites:

In addition to visiting Washington, D.C., the delegations should spend time in no more than one or two locations to allow participants to familiarize themselves with a community. Applicants should describe the rationale for their location selections. ECA encourages applicants to consider proximity to sites of historical or cultural interest, access to organizations that can conduct appropriate workshops, and representation of the diversity of the United States.

#### Accommodations:

In the United States, homestays with local families must be arranged for part of the exchange period. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate adult supervision is an acceptable arrangement for other segments of the program, such as the welcome orientation, the closing session, or special workshops. Youth participants will always have separate rooms from adult mentors and program staff. Further, appropriate supervision should always be implemented when youth are staying in hotel, dormitory, or other accommodation to ensure that youth participants are safe.

The award recipient must have a clear and detailed host family recruitment, screening, and selection process. They also must provide the families with an orientation prior to their exchange participants' arrival which emphasizes the program's goals. Screening needs to include a visit to the home to meet all members of the household to ensure that the host family is capable of providing a comfortable and nurturing home environment. Criminal background checks, including a search of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Sex Offender Public Registry, must be conducted for members of host families (and others living in the home or visiting during the time of the exchange) who are 18 years or older. The orientation will provide families with detailed information on the exchange program, the parameters of their participation, duties and obligations, and information on cultural differences and practices.

ECA encourages diversity in host family recruitment and selection. Host families may represent diversity in terms of family size and structure, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status,

religion, and geography. Exchange participants should be afforded private space in the home. While exchange participants may share a room with someone of a similar age and the same gender, they must have their own bed. Participants may be placed with host families as singles or in pairs. Host families need to have adequate financial resources to undertake hosting obligations.

Follow-on Activities for Alumni: The award recipient will design activities for alumni (of all program years), and support and mentor the youth participants in their follow-on program implementation. This may include providing materials, serving as a resource or advisor, and working with the embassy and adult participant alumni to help nurture on-going contact with the participants. Exchange participants should return home from the exchange prepared to implement projects that serve a need in their schools or communities. ECA seeks creative ideas to ensure that alumni effectively carry out their follow-on programs and remain engaged in activities, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through peers. Alumni programming in the form of seminars, newsletters, and online platforms serves to maximize and extend the exchange program's benefits. Follow-on plans should take into account that internet access may be limited in some areas. Proposals may include travel for a staff member to participate in follow-on activities, which may be organized by the embassy or a local implementing partner, such as follow-on meetings during the year, and the final wrap up in May 2024 for the base program year. All alumni contact information gathered by the award recipient on behalf of this program must be made available to the U.S. Department of State. Please refer to the PSI for additional guidance.

Other notes: The award recipient is responsible for all program components outlined in this document. In addition, the Bureau requires the award recipient to communicate with ECA and PAS on a regular basis about program activities, including recruitment, selection and orientations, host family locations, publicity, impact, and follow-on activities. The award recipient must inform the ECA Program Officer of their progress at each stage of the program's implementation in a timely fashion, and must obtain approval from the Program and Grants Officers in advance for any significant program change. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. ECA will retain copyright use of and can distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Additional Sub-award Recipients: Once the cooperative agreement is awarded, the award recipient may, under ECA direction and approval, bring additional sub-award recipients into the program if needed to meet program requirements.

Participant Monitoring Responsibilities: The award recipient will develop a monitoring plan for program participants. Jóvenes en Acción participants should meet with staff from the implementing partner on a daily basis and their health, safety and well-being must be constantly monitored. The award recipient should outline a plan for monitoring and handling any emergency health or conduct issues, physical or mental, that may occur while participants are on the exchange program. This plan should include constant communication with the program



officer from the onset of the incident through its resolution, as well as any relevant updates.

**Social Media and Website:** The award recipient will maintain consistent branding and a web presence that provides current information about the Jóvenes en Acción program and its alumni. The award recipient will coordinate social media engagement for the program with ECA and in accordance with ECA's social media guidelines to ensure media is appropriate for the level of sensitivity and maintains the online security of those involved. Additionally, the award recipient will ensure the URL address used in online publications, social media platforms, and other digital formats is short and highlights the program name.

Logos from the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassy Mexico City, Mexican Secretariat of Public Education, Jóvenes en Acción and private sector donors are the only ones that can be used in any kind of materials given to participants. Jóvenes en Acción participants funded under this agreement are beneficiaries of the government of the United States and are not to be identified as the award recipient's (the applicant's) participants.

**Alumni Network:** The award recipient will establish a network of alumni and conduct follow-on activities, which will include previous participants to establish a cohesive group for networking. The proposal should clearly state how this will be accomplished and what platform will be used to ensure alumni networking opportunities will be active and robust.

## **SUB-AWARDS**

**Additional guidelines for the sub-award recipients include:**

Sub-award recipients must conform to the same program model and guidelines as the primary award recipient. The primary awardee will be responsible for ensuring consistent, high quality and robust programming across the program and will provide thorough oversight of the portions of the exchanges conducted by the sub-award recipients.

## **III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS**

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner.

Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

**NOTE:** Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)

Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all

Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>.

- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

### **Online Forms**

- SF-424, “Application for Federal Assistance”
- SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
- SF-424B, “Assurances – Non-Construction Programs,” (only required for organizations if its representations and certifications have not been completed in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). If an organization is exempt from registering in SAM.gov, then it would still need to provide the form as part of its application.)
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), form 990 Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only required for organizations that engage in lobbying activities), etc.

### **Program Narrative**

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the program:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed themes
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
  - a. Number and description of participants
  - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
  - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
  - d. Fields covered
  - e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

### **Narrative**

In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the program addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits, and motivation for applying.)
2. Participating Organizations (critical partner organizations, their roles, and their relationship with the applicant, division of responsibilities, and the reason for including them.)
3. Program Activities (advertisement, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring, meetings, site visits, community service, and closing.) A detailed outline of the four-week exchange should be included as an appendix.
4. Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics (stipend disbursement)
5. Program Monitoring and Evaluation
6. Diversity (how the program will support in program content)
7. Institutional Capacity and Project Management
8. Work Plan/Time Frame including COVID contingency plans

#### **Additional Information to be Submitted**

- Detailed Budget: Include all sub-award activities. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.
- Calendar of activities/itinerary
- Letters of endorsement
- Resumes and CVs – resumes of all staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

#### **IV. OTHER AWARD INFORMATION**

##### **ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA**

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://J1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division  
U.S. Department of State  
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)  
2430 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

The solicitation document indicates the date the complete proposal is due and the manner in which proposals must be submitted. **There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline.** For further information regarding this program, contact Naureen Nalia at [NaliaNM@state.gov](mailto:NaliaNM@state.gov).

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